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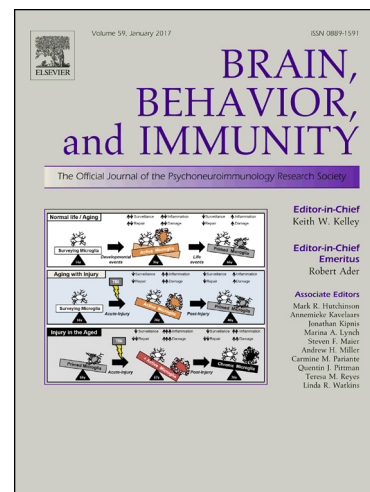
Thirty years of *brain, behavior, and immunity* and counting: how is the journal preparing for the future?

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VIEWPOINT

THIRTY YEARS OF *BRAIN, BEHAVIOR, AND IMMUNITY* AND COUNTING:
HOW IS THE JOURNAL PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE?

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A new Editor-in-Chief

Robert Ader (1987-2002). Keith W. Kelley (2003-2017). Carmine M. Pariante (2018-?). No, this is not a sequence of names that I ever thought I would see.

Certainly not when I first met Bob Ader, in 1993, in Rochester. Nor when I submitted my first paper to *Brain, Behavior and Immunity* (BBI), in 1994 (and was rejected). Nor when I attended my first Psychoneuroimmunology Research Society (PNIRS) conference in Santa Monica, in 1996. Fast-forward a lifetime, and here I am, starting as the third Editor-in-Chief of BBI. Am I scared? You bet I am.

As I have discussed before (Pariante, 2010), being an editor of a scientific journal implies many diverse undertakings: guaranteeing the quality and novelty of papers, anticipating scientific trends, settling ethical disputes between authors, understanding publishers' priorities, and interfacing with the lay press. All of these are particularly important in an area of research that is literally booming.

Psychoneuroimmunology is so hot now that it is difficult to recall how different the field was around the foundation of BBI, in 1987. Back then, the communication between brain, behavior, and immunity was the passion of a relatively small group of scientists interested in multidisciplinary research - ahead of times and against a trend of increasing specialization - as Keith Kelley passionately recalls in his recent viewpoint paper (Kelley, 2017).

So, what does the future look like? Kelley (2017) describes the landscape awaiting his successor: an increasing number of papers submitted to BBI; an increasing presence of the Asian scientific community; an increasing multidisciplinary; an increasing relevance for the treatment of mental disorders.

How will I prepare the journal for this future?

Seeking the best papers

Do you have an excellent set of data linking immunity with brain and/or behavior? An important observation? A hitherto unknown mechanism? Do you have a killer idea for an authoritative review? A proposal for a special issue on a rapidly-developing topic? Then we (I and the associate editors) would like to hear from you.

Write us an email. Drag us to your posters. Tell us about your talks. Let us know about you and your work. We cannot guarantee acceptance, obviously, but we can guarantee a fair and rapid review process.

Streamlining the review process

But, a fair and rapid review process comes at a cost. The current acceptance rate for BBI is at around 30%: half of what it was 10 years ago. If the number of submissions continues to grow, acceptance rate will likely decrease further.

An increasingly-used solution in other journals, which we have decided to adopt, is to only send for peer-review those papers with a reasonable chance of publication. The others will be rejected by myself and the allocated Associated Editor, before reaching the peer-review stage. Not a sudden change, more of a direction of travel; but a direction that BBI, like many other journals, is inevitably travelling toward.

Empowering the Editorial Board

BBI *is* its Editorial Board: scientists who dedicate their time to reviewing papers, taking the lead on special issues, writing state-of-the-art reviews.

I am keen to expand the number of Editorial Board members, especially to maximize diversity and to represent the new geography of our readership and authors. Invitations to new members are on their way, and many letters are travelling East.

But, if you are already a regular reviewer for BBI, and you think you have got what it takes to be an Editorial Board Member – time, commitment, curiosity – then write to me and put your name forward.

Publishing more opinion pieces

BBI is firstly and mostly a data-based journal. But I also want to help make sense of these data. Hence, I am encouraging more opinion pieces.

As I have mentioned above, I will welcome state-of-the-art, authoritative reviews on important topics: topics that have never been reviewed before, or topics that require a new appraisal due to the emergence of new data suggesting a new mechanistic interpretation or translational impact.

Short commentaries on individual papers published in BBI will also continue to be featured, published alongside the relevant article both online and in the issue. If you are a reviewer for a truly exciting paper, please highlight the paper to me, and of course, volunteer to write a commentary.

Translating into patients' benefit

I have argued before that the latest appearance of the term “immunopsychiatry”, in addition to the more classic “psychoneuroimmunology”, exemplifies a recent recognition that targeting the immune system can have therapeutic benefit for both behavior and emotions (Pariante, 2015).

I want BBI to be the vehicle that delivers this translational impact.

I will welcome solid, well-designed clinical trials testing the effects of immune manipulations on mental health – not only with medications, but also with psychosocial interventions.

Efficacy and mechanistic trials, where blood- or neuroimaging-based biomarkers are also measured to explain how the immune manipulation works, are particularly welcome.

Discussing the big questions

And finally, in an era of increasing public desire for scientific communication and dissemination, I will publish a fresh type of *Viewpoint* papers: short, blog-style feature for the informed-lay-reader type, less than 1000 words, with a fast pace and a direct tone. This Viewpoint is the first of the new type.

I am hoping to attract contributions from a multitude of disciplines: not only from classical BBI areas, but also from the social sciences and humanities, as well as from writers, journalists and other experts – all interested in the overarching connection between brain and body. Most viewpoints will be published immediately with full open access, at no cost to the author.

We are dealing with some of the most profound questions that affect global health and society. Why do social deprivation and discrimination increase morbidity and mortality? How does stress early in life create a trajectory of poor mental and physical health? Where do the body and the brain communicate? What do we mean when we say, 'I feel sick'?

Let's discuss these big questions in BBI.

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